

Testimony of

Keri Pringer

Submitted to the Connecticut Appropriations Committee

February 21, 2017

Dear Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Keri Pringer and I am a student in the Bridgeport area who has worked with children in the community through volunteer opportunities. I urge you to fully fund after school programs, as the state budget for the biennium ending June 30, 2019 states a zero dollar budget.

After school programs provide structure in children's lives. As a former peer tutoring program coordinator for my high school in Westerly, RI, I encountered many students in need of professional academic assistance. While my program helped students connect with peer tutors who have experience in that subject, the program could have been further enhanced through the support of professional assistance of which is provided through after school program funding. Without funding to these programs, students in 9 Bridgeport public schools will do significantly worse academically and be at risk for failure. Without after school commitments, children will be more susceptible for gang targeting and engagement in risky behaviors. These programs are not a need in the community, they are **a must** and I urge you to fund after school programs in full to ensure a safe community and a greater education for Bridgeport students.

Sincerely,

Keri Pringer